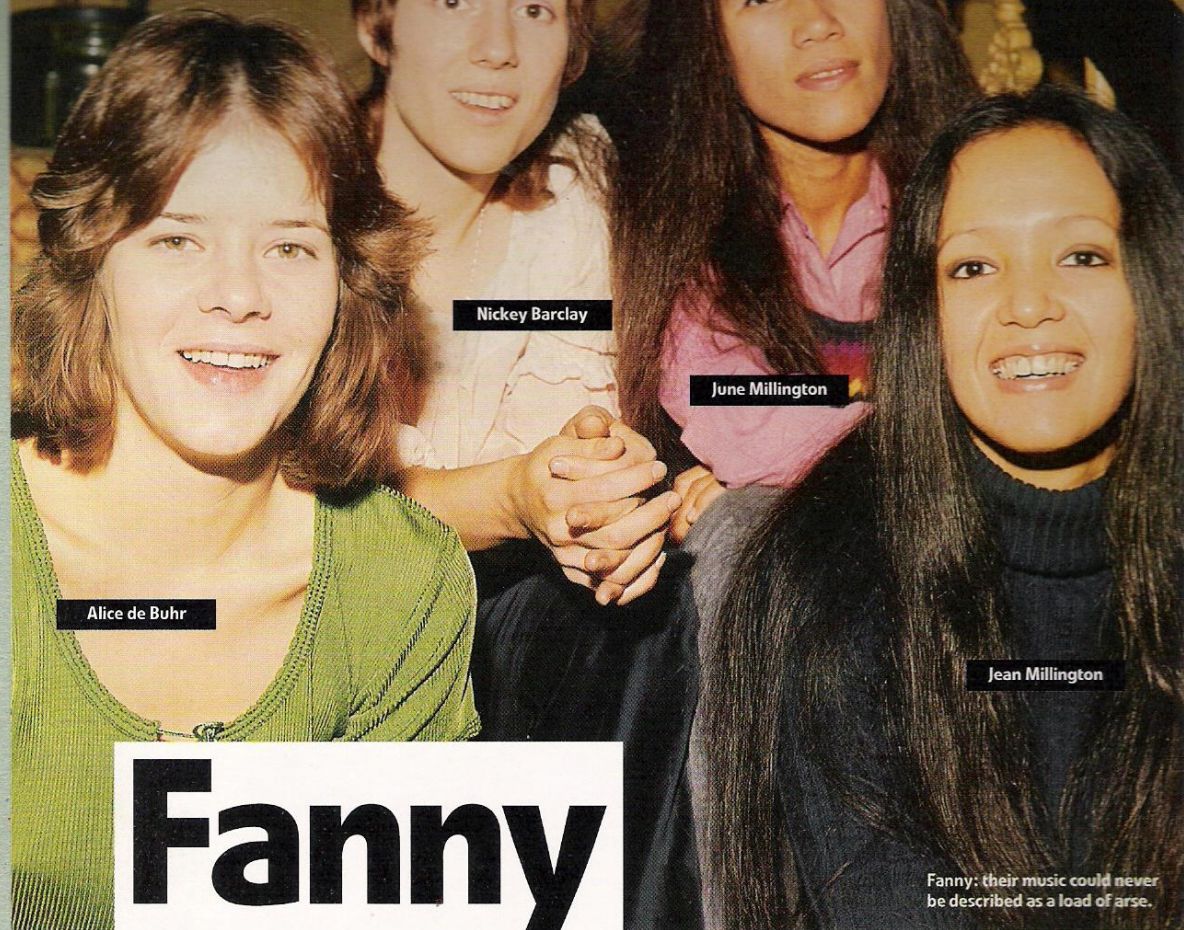


For every George Michael, there has to be an Owen Paul

where are they now



Alice de Buhr

Nickey Barclay

June Millington

Jean Millington

Fanny

Fanny: their music could never be described as a load of arse.

London Features

In 1970, four American women formed Fanny, the first all-female band to make headway in male-centric rock, and thus pave the way for others. George Harrison went as far as calling them "the female Beatles" and they lasted five albums. But where are the Girl Power pioneers now, asks Martin Warming of Rickmansworth?

June Millington *guitar, vocals*
She quit after Fanny's 1973 album *Mother's Pride*, and was replaced by Suzi Quatro's sister Patti. "I had a nervous breakdown. We toured constantly for four years and led a very insular life. I couldn't take the pressure of being the first girl guitar player around. It was discouraging to realise that the only point we could make was that we could play like guys." Craving respect, she started jamming with musician friends before moving to Woodstock where she began "a Buddhist path" and fell in with "women's music" pioneer Cris Williamson. "I was no longer objectified on stage, so I could relax, and fool around." She has released four roots-orientated albums on her own label Fabulous and is currently artistic director of California's Institute For The Musical Arts, a centre for women's music. She also plays in The Slamming Babes - "yup, we slam". As for The Spice Girls, "Right on! It sounds like they're at the point where I had my breakdown!"

Alice de Buhr *drums*
She quit just after June Millington. "Patti Quatro didn't even know how to tune her guitar - the quality of female musicians out there was so depressing. Nickey (Barclay, keyboards) was incredibly difficult to handle too. I'd just had enough." She worked in a veterinary hospital and a record distribution warehouse before joining A&M as a local marketing co-ordinator. Six years later, she decided video "was the future". After moving to Tucson, Arizona, she started her own video distribution company, Inner Visions Group, handling mostly "special interest" releases. As for music, "I regret not being dedicated enough. I still tap on everything around, bopping away, at 48 years old. I thought about playing again but it would take a while. I'm so rusty." As for Fanny's legacy, "Articles about women in rock still don't mention us, which tends to reaffirm my feelings after I quit."

Jean Millington *bass, vocals*
She steered Fanny through 1974's *Rock'n Roll Survivors* album before personal clashes with Barclay instigated the end. Ironically, a single, *Butter Boy*, went Top 10, so she suggested re-forming to sister June, and they became the Fanny All Stars. "Then June refused to sign another deal as Fanny and it fell apart." Friends with David Bowie, she sung backing vocals on *Young Americans* (she

later married Bowie's then guitarist Earl Slick) before she and June landed a deal with United Artists as Millington, but their album got lost in the EMI takeover "and we just gave up". After raising two kids, she's since played alongside June in Cris Williamson's band and The Slamming Babes ("the musicianship is phenomenal, and our singing is so much stronger") but she has been a certified herbalist for five years. "I do energy healing, working with discharging electrical charges out of the body. I was always very interested in health, and it went from there." Reckons "it's not that different from music because all of it is healing. And it's given me so much confidence in myself. I can look at my playing now and hold my head high."

Nickey Barclay *keyboards*
She eventually moved to London after Fanny split, where she worked under the name Annie Laurie. Bri Howard, who replaced de Buhr in Fanny, bumped into her in London in 1993. "She was playing in a club, looking and sounding better than ever, and still rocking. I think she always wanted to be British! She was always into British bands." According to Jean Millington, "Nickey completely assumed the persona of an Irish person. She had a lot of emotional problems - she was hugely embarrassed about her roots, hence the taking on of another persona. But she's an incredible talent."

Words: Martin Warming